

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A device for ~~temporarily creating and maintaining a depositing cavity in a container to be~~ filling a container filled with a plurality of objects, in particular flexible packages, standing substantially upright on ~~[[the]]~~ a floor portion of ~~[[said]]~~ the container, [[said]] the device including comprising:

a depositing cavity temporarily created and maintained in the container for receiving one of the plurality of objects;

a first moveable planar ~~[[first]]~~ restraining member ~~with an~~ having a first anterior surface facing ~~into said~~ the depositing cavity and a first posterior surface, the first posterior surface restraining a previously deposited object against movement; and

a second moveable planar ~~second~~ restraining member ~~with an~~ having a second anterior surface facing ~~into said~~ the depositing cavity and a second posterior surface;

wherein the depositing cavity is defined in an object receiving configuration by the first and second anterior surfaces, the floor portion of the container, and opposing side walls of the container,

wherein the first and second restraining members ~~[[being]]~~ are operationally arranged to be removably insertable into and between ~~facing~~ the opposing side walls of ~~[[a]]~~ the container ~~to be filled with upright stacked objects and thereby to define a temporary cavity which facilitates the insertion of the objects into the container, and~~

~~wherein said cavity is defined, in an object receiving configuration, by facing anterior surfaces of said first and second restraining members, by facing side walls of~~

~~said container and by a portion of the floor of said container delimited thereby, such that upon deposition a given object sits upon said portion of said floor and between said facing anterior surfaces, and wherein the posterior surface of said first restraining member acts to restrain previously deposited objects against movement; and~~

~~wherein, following deposition of an object after one of the plurality of objects is deposited into ~~[[said]]~~ the depositing cavity, ~~[[said]]~~ the first restraining member ~~may be withdrawn~~ is movable from ~~[[its]]~~ a position on ~~[[one]]~~ a first side of ~~[[said]]~~ one of the plurality of objects, and reinserted so as to take up a new restraining position on the opposite side of said object to a new restraining position on an opposing second side of one of the plurality of objects, and ~~[[said]]~~ the second restraining member ~~may then be moved away~~ is movable away from ~~[[said]]~~ the first restraining member thereby to create a new depositing cavity for the deposition of a further object.~~

2. (Currently amended) The device of claim 1, wherein the first and second restraining members are at least partly partially defined by a comb-like structure, ~~consisting of~~ including successive teeth and gaps; ~~and wherein said,~~ the first and second restraining members ~~[[are]]~~ being disposed ~~relative to one another~~ in an interleaving manner such that the teeth of the first restraining member are aligned in a plane with the gaps between the teeth of the second restraining member, ~~thereby to allow, following deposition of a package into said cavity and withdrawal of said first restraining member from its position on one side of said object, said first restraining member to be inserted through said second restraining member in an interleaving manner so as to take up a new restraining position on the opposite side of said object~~

as the first restraining member moves to the new restraining position on the opposing second side of the one of the plurality of objects.

3. (Currently amended) The device of claim 1 or 2, wherein at least one of ~~[[said]]~~ the first and second restraining members is formed from a sheet material.

4. (Currently amended) The device of claim 3, wherein both the first and second restraining members are formed from the sheet material.

5. (Currently amended) The device of claim 2, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the teeth are formed from a rod material.

6. (Currently amended) The device of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the surfaces of ~~[[said]]~~ the first restraining member are treated to reduce their coefficient of friction.

7. (Currently amended) The device of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the first restraining member is mounted on a moveable articulated arm~~[[,]]~~ and is pivotally connected to ~~[[said]]~~ the arm such that ~~[[the]]~~ a centre of gravity of the first restraining member is substantially directly beneath ~~[[the]]~~ a centre-line of ~~[[said]]~~ a pivot.

8. (Currently amended) The device of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein in ~~[[said]]~~ the object receiving configuration, ~~[[said]]~~ the first restraining member is actively

biased such that ~~[[its]]~~ the first posterior surface acts to place ~~[[such]]~~ the previously deposited objects under compression, sufficient to prevent relative movement amongst ~~[[said]]~~ the plurality of objects.

9. (Currently amended) The device of claim 8, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the compression may be released immediately prior to a withdrawal of ~~[[said]]~~ the first restraining member from ~~said case~~ the container.

10. (Currently amended) The device of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein in ~~[[said]]~~ the object receiving configuration, ~~[[said]]~~ the first and second restraining members are disposed within ~~[[said]]~~ the container such that ~~[[said]]~~ the floor portion of ~~[[said]]~~ the container ~~[[floor]]~~ represents substantially ~~[[the]]~~ a final position of ~~[[said]]~~ the plurality of objects in ~~[[said]]~~ the container, thereby obviating any requirement for the deposited objects to be subsequently repositioned.

11. (Currently amended) The device of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein in ~~[[said]]~~ the object receiving configuration, ~~[[said]]~~ the first and second restraining members are disposed within ~~[[said]]~~ the container such that ~~[[said]]~~ the depositing cavity tends to taper inward toward ~~[[said]]~~ the floor portion of ~~[[said]]~~ the container.

12. (Currently amended) The device of claim 11, wherein in ~~[[said]]~~ the object receiving configuration, at least one of ~~[[said]]~~ the first and second restraining members

is arranged to allow a pivoting movement of its lower extremity away from the other of ~~[[said]]~~ the first and second restraining members, and

wherein a bias against ~~[[said]]~~ the pivoting movement is provided~~[[,]]~~ such that a braking force may be exerted on ~~[[an]]~~ the object falling into ~~[[said]]~~ the depositing cavity, while allowing ~~[[said]]~~ the depositing cavity to expand to accommodate ~~[[said]]~~ the object.

13. (Currently amended) The device of claim 12, wherein both the first and second restraining members are arranged to allow the pivoting movement of their lower extremities away from each other, and

wherein a bias against ~~[[said]]~~ the pivoting movement is provided to both the first and second restraining members.

14. (Currently amended) The device of ~~any of claims 12 or 13~~ claim 12, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the bias is provided by a spring-loading mechanism.

15. (Currently amended) The device of ~~any of claims 2 to 14~~ claim 2, wherein during ~~[[said]]~~ an insertion of ~~[[said]]~~ the first restraining member through ~~[[said]]~~ the second restraining member, a cradle is formed between ~~[[said]]~~ the first and second anterior surfaces of ~~[[said]]~~ the first and second restraining members, respectively, ~~that is capable of catching and holding~~ to catch and hold one of ~~[[said]]~~ the plurality of objects.

16. (Currently amended) The device ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the plurality of objects fall into ~~[[said]]~~ the depositing cavity via ~~[[the]]~~ a force of gravity ~~[[alone]]~~.

17. (Currently amended) The device of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the plurality of objects are relatively stiff, and wherein the first posterior surface of said first restraining member ~~[[only]]~~ contacts an upper portion of ~~[[said]]~~ the previously deposited objects to restrain them against movement.

18. (Currently amended) The device of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the container is a commercial packaging receptacle for consumer goods.

19. (Currently amended) The device of claim 18, wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the plurality of objects are packages constructed from a flexible film and ~~[[which]]~~ contain a powder, solid articles, or liquids.

20. (Currently amended) The device of claim 18, ~~[[or 19]]~~ wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the plurality of objects are not readily capable of standing substantially upright on a flat surface.

21. (Currently amended) A method of depositing the plurality of objects into ~~[[a]]~~ the container, including the steps of:

positioning ~~an open~~ the container in a filling position relative to ~~[[a]]~~ the device according to ~~any of claims 1 to 17~~ claim 1;

inserting ~~[[said]]~~ the first and second restraining members into ~~[[said]]~~ the container in ~~[[said]]~~ the object receiving configuration, ~~thereby creating a deposition cavity disposed to receive said object to create the depositing cavity for receiving the plurality of objects;~~

~~causing an object to drop~~ dropping one of the plurality of objects into ~~[[said]]~~ the depositing cavity;

withdrawing ~~[[said]]~~ the first restraining member from ~~[[said]]~~ the container;

reinserting ~~[[said]]~~ the first restraining member into ~~[[said]]~~ the container such that it takes up ~~[[a]]~~ the new restraining position on the ~~opposite~~ opposing second side of ~~[[said]]~~ one of the plurality of objects ~~such that it restrains~~ to restrain both the most recently deposited object and all previously deposited objects from movement;

moving ~~[[said]]~~ the second restraining member away from ~~[[said]]~~ the first restraining member ~~thereby to create~~ to create ~~[[a]]~~ the new depositing cavity ~~for the deposition of a further object;~~

repeating the above cycle until ~~[[said]]~~ the container is filled;

withdrawing ~~[[said]]~~ the first and second restraining members from ~~[[said]]~~ the container;

removing the filled container from ~~[[said]]~~ the filling position; and

repeating the above sequence.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein [[said]] the container is a commercial package for consumer goods.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein [[said]] the plurality of objects are packages constructed from a flexible film and [[which]] contain a powder, solid articles, or liquids.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, [[or 23]] wherein [[said]] the plurality of objects are not readily capable of standing substantially upright on a flat surface.

25. (Currently amended) A packaging line for filling the containers with the plurality of objects, including [[a]] the device as defined in ~~any of claims 1 to 17~~ claim 1.

26. (Currently amended) The packaging line of claim 25, wherein [[said]] the containers are commercial packaging receptacles for consumer goods.

27. (Currently amended) The packaging line of claim 26, wherein [[said]] the plurality of objects are packages constructed from a flexible film and [[which]] contain a powder, solid articles, or liquids.

28. (Currently amended) The packaging line of claim 26, ~~[[or 27]]~~ wherein ~~[[said]]~~ the plurality of objects are not readily capable of standing substantially upright on a flat surface.